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## “IS IT POSSIBLE NOT TO LOVE ŽIŽEK?” ON SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK’S MISSED ENCOUNTER WITH DELEUZE

PHILOFICTION ŽIŽEK, BODY-WITHOUT-ORGANS, DELEUZE/GUATTARI, NON-PHILOSOPHY, VIRTUALITY

[Slavoj Žižek: *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2003)]

The following text can be read fast-forward or in slow-motion. The fast-forward version provides the main argument, the slow-motion version provides the argument plus more detailed commentaries.

We have come to love Slavoj Žižek for his extremely witty mappings of Lacanian theory onto philosophy, global politics and late-capitalist economics *through* popular culture – in particular *through* the movies – which means that in order to read Žižek properly one needs to love both high culture and low comedy. In fact reading his books is in itself a lot like watching a Marx brothers movie. As with the Marx brothers, who can only act so madly because they are always in complete control of their madness [like Salvador Dali said, “the only difference between me and a madman is that I am not mad”] Žižek’s quirkiness functions so well only because below the *sprezzatura*, the rhetorical fireworks and the surprising turns, his texts are invariably informed by the stringency, the analytical power, the inherent elegance and the consistency of the Lacanian logic. Actually, Žižek is not only one of the most prominent but also one of the most hardline Lacanians we have at the moment. One does well, therefore, to grant a number of conceptual givens when opening one of his books: 1. topologically, the Real is a mere cut|twist aligning the Imaginary and the Symbolic. It is, quite paradoxically, both the excluded|impossible outside of the symbolic order *and* its ‘stupid,’ non-sensical kernel. 2. temporally, the Lacanian subject is always already immanent to the various orders of representation [in particular images and words] because it is invariably retrospective [*nachträglich*]. 3. as a result of 1. and 2., direct access to the Real is impossible. ‘Close Encounters’ with the Real as the hard, non-symbolizable kernel of reality, as in moments of *jouissance*|trauma, are invariably missed. [“The Real is the absent Cause of the Symbolic. The Freudian and Lacanian name for this cause is, of course, trauma” (*The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality* (London: Verso, 1994. 30)). In other words, the Real is the “non-integrated surplus of senseless traumatism” (*The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989) 43)]. The main lesson to be drawn from these Lacanian givens and in Žižek especially from their Hegelian roots is that a fundamental and constitutive negativity|lack within the symbolic order, embodied by the phallus as ‘the signifier of the signifier’ [“the point of non-sense sustaining the flow of sense” (*Organs* 27)], opens up a fundamental positivity. In more psychoanalytic terms, castration is the prerequisite for emancipation.¶ The true measure of the “axiomatics” (ix) of the Deleuzian

project lies in the extent to which it questions these givens which is why, in order to engage with this project, they should be put up for debate, at least provisionally. Unfortunately, Žižek never goes that far. *Organs without Bodies* [symptomatically, Žižek does not acknowledge that the term 'organ without a body,' which seems to be another of Žižek's clever reversals, is actually a Deleuzian term. As Deleuze notes in *A Thousand Plateaus*, in a quote that directly 'addresses' most of Žižek's concerns about Deleuze, "it is not at all a question of a fragmented, splintered body, of organs without the body (OwB). The BwO is exactly the opposite. There are not organs in the sense of fragments to a lost unity, nor is there a return to the undifferentiated in relation to a differentiable totality. There is a distribution of intensive principles of organs, with their positive indefinite articles, within a collectivity or multiplicity, inside an assemblage, and according to machinic connections operating on a BwO. *Logos spermaticos*. The error of psychoanalysis was to understand BwO phenomena as regressions, projections, phantasies, in terms of an image of the body. As a result, it only grasps the flipside of the BwO and immediately substitutes family photos, childhood memories, and part-objects for a worldwide intensity map. It understands nothing about ... indefinite articles nor about the contemporaneity of a continually self-constructing milieu" (*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Athlone Press, 1988. 164))] reads as if Žižek wanted to posthumously convince Deleuze that he *should have* adopted the Hegel|Lacan matrix. In fact, Žižek argues, despite Deleuze's surface rhetorics against Hegel in particular and anything Hegelian in general, Deleuze *did* unconsciously adopt these givens. From this claim it is only a small step to another one of Žižek's 'intriguing' propositions. If we would expect Žižek to argue that in becoming more Hegelian Deleuze should have become *less* Deleuzian, he argues something that amounts to the same thing but that sounds much more interesting: Deleuze should have been *even more* Deleuzian because he was 'in actual fact' almost the Hegel he disliked so much. "In Witold Gombrowicz's novel *Pornografia*, the young girl Henia tells Witold, the narrator, that although her parents have seen her make love to a young member of the Resistance, 'in actual fact' they do not know anything about it. This paradox is utterly inexplicable to Witold: "I asked her if her parents suspected anything ... to which she replied: 'they certainly suspect something because they caught us at it. But in actual fact they don't suspect anything.' 'In actual fact' – what a brilliant expression! A magical expression which concealed everything" (*Pornografia* (New York: Grove Press, 1967. 61)). According to this logic, only to be *even more* Deleuzian would have turned him fully into Hegel. Consider in this context the logic of the following: "beneath this Deleuze, (the popular image of Deleuze based on the reading of the books he co-authored with Felix Guattari), there is another Deleuze, much closer to psychoanalysis and Hegel, a Deleuze whose consequences are much more shattering" (*Organs* xi). Does this not imply that Deleuze becomes consequential only to the degree that he turns into Hegel|Lacan? Maybe it is this curious position of Deleuze *vis-à-vis* Hegel that makes it at times so difficult to detect a general position *vis-à-vis* Deleuze in Žižek's book, which often oscillates dangerously between admiration and fascination on the one hand and a fundamental critique ["buggery" (47)] on the other. Between passages of serious engagement with Deleuze, Žižek writes sentences like: "And to go a step further, is the practice of fist-fucking not the exemplary case of what Deleuze called the "expansion of a concept?" ... No wonder Foucault, Deleuze's Other, was practicing fisting" (*Organs* 188). Such a sentence is objectionable not because it is irreverent, politically incorrect or because it touches upon a taboo [all of that, in fact, would make it at least slightly interesting], but simply because it is irrelevant. Žižek's argument, of course, is reminiscent of Freud's wonderfully laconic statement about the logic of negation. When a patient told Freud that he did not know the identity of a female figure that he had seen in his dream but that he was sure that it was 'definitely not his mother,' Freud simply notes: "We correct, it is the mother." Similarly, when Deleuze notes that his philosophy, whatever it might be, is 'definitely not Hegelian,' Žižek simply notes: 'We correct, it is Hegelian.' When Deleuze singles out Hegel for his vitriolics, he does so only because of a deep unconscious investment. His "urge to 'stupidize' Hegel" (48) is only the reverse side of a fundamental love|identity. Žižek sexualizes this love in an image itself taken from Deleuze: "what monster would have emerged if we were to stage the ghastly scene of the specter of Hegel taking Deleuze from behind" (47). Deleuze's original goes like this: "I saw myself as taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous. It was really important for it to be his own child, because the author had to actually say all I had him saying. But the child was bound to be monstrous too, because it resulted from all sorts of shifting, slipping, dislocations, and hidden emissions that I really enjoyed." ("Letter to a Harsh Critic." *Negotiations. 1972 – 1990* (New York: Columbia UP, 1995, 3-12. 6)). What is Žižek's investment in this image, which curiously redoubles the one on another philosophical postcard? Anybody who has ever read one of Žižek's books knows that the two basic attractors around which his thought revolves are Lacan and Hegel. As the philosophical supplement to Lacanian psychoanalysis, Hegel is probably even more important to Žižek than he is to Lacan. He is a constant presence in Žižek's books, sometimes more, as in *Tarrying with the Negative* (Durham: Duke UP, 1993) which, let me note in passing, contains the theoretical background on Hegel that Žižek reheats in *Organs Without Bodies*, and sometimes less, but even when Žižek is not directly talking *about* Hegel, he is 'talking Hegel.' Not surprisingly, Žižek's deepest interest lately is the legacy of German idealism a.k.a. Hegel & Co. [For more on this interest, see the interview with Žižek in *ebr*]¶ For somebody so invested in Hegel, Deleuze, in his acknowledged and often repeated dislike of Hegel, must present a formidable irritation. He is the philosophical itch Žižek would love to scratch. Symptomatically, for a long time Deleuze was as absent from Žižek's work as Hegel was from Deleuze's. *Organs Without Bodies'* primal scene lies in a chapter from *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, in which Žižek dealt for a first time in more detail with Deleuze. The stakes, therefore, are high and they go something like this: If Hegel|Lacan can be saved from Deleuze by way of turning Deleuze into Hegel|Lacan, Žižek, and with him psychoanalysis, has scored big. [Derrida is a less threatening reference. Žižek had dealt with him *en passant* when he had argued that Lacan is not a poststructuralist.' If it turns out, however, that Deleuze is not Hegel|Lacan and that he refuses to be turned into them, Žižek is in trouble.¶ In a number of ways, the battle that rages over Hegel is reminiscent of the one that rages over Poe's purloined letter. If Hegel is the purloined philosopher, who is his rightful owner? Can Žižek return the 'original Hegel according to Žižek,' which means the *true* philosopher of immanence, to the boudoir of

German Idealism and thus save the queen of philosophy from the hold that Deleuze, who has purloined Hegel and hidden him above his mantelpiece in the disguise of a Hegel exceedingly different from "that philosopher of immanence," potentially has over her? Has Deleuze indeed turned Hegel inside-out, as Žižek claims, which would mean that the return of the re-turned Hegel would restore the original Hegel, and with it, quite ironically, return Deleuze to himself, *Organs without Body* being the extended note that Žižek leaves because of the bad turn Deleuze has done Lacan|Žižek, 'in Vienna?' In Duchampian terms, who has painted the moustache onto Hegel's face and who has erased it? Or has 'in actual fact' Žižek purloined Hegel? Ultimately: why does Žižek's Hegel look so much like Deleuze and why does Deleuze's Hegel look so much like Lacan? How to read the 'excessive difference' between Žižek's and Deleuze's Hegel? ¶ Let's assume for the moment, with Žižek, that Deleuze has indeed purloined Hegel. What one needs for a re-turn to Hegel are of course green glasses, some pre-arranged pyrotechnics and a bi-part soul, capable of both observation and ad-measurement. One needs to be both a poet and a mathematician. Nobody in their right mind would ever doubt Žižek's powers of ad-measurement, which are daunting, to say the least. What, however, about those of observation? The true test of the success or failure of Žižek's book lies not in the consistency of his arguments as such, but in the degree to which he, and with him Lacan, can see|imagine the true measure of the Deleuzian project.

in advance

Before I get to the various misunderstandings that seem to me to define Žižek's encounter with Deleuze, a number of things about *Organs without Bodies* that are not directly related to Žižek's theoretical project, but which one should know in order not to be disappointed in the book. 1. *Organs Without Bodies* is over long stretches not about Deleuze at all. The reason for this is not so much that Lacan and Deleuze mark "incompatible fields" (*Organs* xi) whose collision entails "over and above the symbolic exchange" (xi) a "traumatic impact" (xi) but simply because Žižek, probably even more so than in his other books, loves to digress. More than half of it [roughly 138 of its 226 pages] is either not about Deleuze, or stands only in a very loose relation to his work. In particular, these are the chapters in the 'consequences' section [pages 111 to 148], two of which start off with short Deleuzian references to then go on to 'something completely different.' At such moments, one suspects that the Deleuzian argument is merely a rhetorical glue that holds together a number of textual [auto]samplings that round up once more Žižek's usual suspects: Bush, Slovenia, Cognitive Science, Hitchcock, the Palestine, the Left, the Right, the Middle, bad jokes, dumb movies. In the first consequences chapter, Žižek deals with a number of topics that are, potentially, extremely pertinent to Deleuze, such as the concepts of emergence and autopoiesis. Unfortunately, he fails to connect them to the Deleuzian project. The second consequence chapter – in which Deleuze is mentioned exactly four times, once for his interest in Hitchcock (*Organs* 154-5), once in the context of a short reference to the Appendix of *Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia UP, 1990, 161), once for a short passage about dark precursors (171) and once for a short reference to the Virtual and the Actual (173) – provides an excellent Lacanian rhapsody on Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* and a number of minor movies. The third consequence chapter, which is for my taste the weakest part of the whole book, opens with the image of a yuppie who reads Deleuze on the subway and who uses him to legitimate his deep investment in the 'intensive field of late capitalism.' This conceit is of course based on a very common misreading of Deleuze that has to do mainly with the reception of *Anti-Oedipus*, which installed Deleuze and Guattari as masters of anarchy|revolt and made them either loved or hated because of what was read as their relentless unleashing of 'pure desire' into the symbolic arena. For better or worse, however, neither Deleuze nor Guattari have ever promoted such a 'summer of desire' [one need only read Guattari's *Three Ecologies* to get an idea of his 'humanism' (London: Athlone Press, 2000)]. "Is this logic where we are no longer dealing with persons interacting, but just with the multiplicity of intensities, of places of enjoyment, plus bodies as a collective/impersonal desiring machine, not eminently Deleuzian?" (*Organs* 188), Žižek wonders about the late-capitalist dance of intensities. Well, yes, in a way. But quite definitely not in the way that Žižek's question implies. If one could so easily equate Deleuze's delight in intensities with the intensities that are [un]bound within and co-opted by an 'intensive capitalism,' things would indeed be as easy as they are for Žižek. Fortunately, one cannot. There is a plane of pure intensity and multiplicity in Deleuze, of which more later, but it looks nothing like the plane of 'intensive capitalism.' Another topic in this section is Deleuze's reading of fascism as a molar machine, which might indeed call for a close analysis. If Žižek's claim is that for Deleuze everything bad is fascist, one should, however, be careful in talking about "the fascism of the irrational vitalism of Deleuze" (195), even if such a statement is meant slightly tongue-in-cheek. Never mind that Žižek might well be right in noting that Deleuze and Guattari "indulge here in a true interpretative delirium of hasty generalizations" (195). What is more interesting is that Žižek does precisely the same, which is a sign that he is losing his cool. The rest of the chapter is about Hardt and Negri as 'representatives' of Deleuze, something that is an extremely questionable and somewhat unfair assumption to begin with. The chapter ends with another one of Žižek's extended polemics against 'the Left.' 2. Where the book is about Deleuze – especially its first 100 pages – it relies on the surprisingly small slice of his work that Žižek considers "Deleuze proper" (20) [*Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), *The Logic of Sense*, *Cinema I* and *II* (London: Athlone, 1986; 1989), *Proust and Signs* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), *Masochism* (New York: Zone Books, 1989)], as if his other books were in some way not 'really Deleuze.' This is unfortunate not only because it implies that it is possible to administer a clean cut between a proper and an improper Deleuze, but also because a number of questions Žižek has about Deleuze are answered in the 'improper' books [such as *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), *Bergsonism* (New York: Zone Books, 1988), *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004)]. 3. The book is not for readers who want to learn something about Deleuze in the sense of being led through the complexities of his texts. [Žižek hardly ever takes the time to deal directly and in detail with Deleuze's texts, their contexts, their internal logics or with the complex resonances between his various texts. Symptomatically, in central passages he relies on Manuel DeLanda [*Intensive Science and*

*Virtual Philosophy* (New York: Continuum, 2002)] rather than on Deleuze himself]. In fact, one does well to re-read *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* before reading Žižek in order not to immediately lose one's bearings. 4. Žižek seldom deals with the secondary literature that has accrued around Deleuze [notable exceptions are Manuel DeLanda, Brian Massumi [*A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992)] and, for what will turn out to be obvious reasons, Alain Badiou [*Deleuze: The Clamor of Being* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000)]. 5. The book disregards the extremely rich and dense discursive field defining Deleuze's relation to thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Michel Serres, Ilya Prigogine|Isabelle Stengers or René Thom. Invariably, the context of Žižek's argument is the wager between Deleuze on the one side and Hegel|Lacan on the other.

#### what does žižek want?

"Is not this Virtual ultimately the Symbolic as such?" (4) Žižek asks, in one of the first of the rhetorical questions that have become his stylistic trademark and that carry many of his provocative theses. [Give or take a few, *Organs without Body* contains 534 question marks. I stopped counting how many times Žižek is 'tempted' to either 'do' certain things or to 'assume' certain things]. This is surprising, especially when one considers that only moments before he had noted that the Virtual is identical to the "Real" (3) in the sense of being the 'force-field' that organizes a specific attractor-landscape. Later on in the book, Žižek repeats that the Real "is on the side of the virtual" (173). After these at first sight inconsistent theses, Žižek describes in detail and with his usual lucidity what he considers Deleuze to mean by 'the Virtual' [Curiously, Žižek does not deal with *Bergsonism* here, which is full of the Virtual and the Actual. In fact, Bergson's notions of duration and of the Virtual are seminal references for Deleuze's philosophical machine, especially in relation to the itself highly Bergsonian notions of becoming and multiplicity ["the two fundamental characteristics of duration: continuity and heterogeneity" (*Bergsonism* 37)]. Duration [durée, as opposed to digital 'temps'] "is the virtual insofar as it is actualized, in the course of being actualized, it is inseparable from the movement of its actualization" (42-3). In this context, if "the possible is the opposite of the real ... the virtual is opposed to the actual" (96)] and if one wonders why he didn't immediately go back and delete at least one of the initial theses after that description, one has not yet grasped his general project.¶ If the Virtual is "the infinite potential field out of which *reality* is actualized" (4, emphasis added), then to identify the Virtual with the Symbolic means that it is not only a part of the field of language|representation but indeed that very field itself. Only a couple of pages later, Žižek notes that the key to the paradox that the new comes into being through repetition is "of course, [note #1 for a reader's manual: whenever Žižek writes 'of course,' be particularly careful!] what Deleuze designates as the difference between the Virtual and the Actual (and which – why not? – one can also determine as the difference between Spirit and Letter)" (*Organs* 12). This mapping once more projects the Virtual|Actual couple into the field and logic of representation, this time via the concepts of 'the Spirit' and 'the Letter,' which are well-known Lacanian references referring to the s|l couple. This in turn implies that when Žižek says reality, he actually means human|discursive|psychic reality. Unfortunately, Žižek never provides definitions of key terms such as 'reality.' If he would, the task of untangling his text would be less difficult and the reasons for his 'misunderstandings' would be a lot more obvious. To at the same time identify the Virtual with the Real, however, implies that it is *not* part of the representational field because the Real is famously 'without fissure' and therefore fundamentally absent|excluded from the Symbolic. Already at this point, one would like to sit down with Žižek and talk things over in more detail. If "Being and Becoming" also relate "as Actual and Virtual" (*Organs* 25), Žižek's mappings make on the one side for the series: *Virtual* -> *Real*|*Symbolic* -> *Spirit* -> *Becoming* and on the other for that of: *Actual* -> *Letter* -> *Being*. Even if I have taken these references out of context here, one can imagine how difficult it would be to reconcile them. Unfortunately, while one still ponders the possible implications, Žižek is already somewhere else. Jackson Pollock is calling ["perhaps Jackson Pollock is the ultimate 'Deleuzian painter'" (*Organs* 5) Žižek notes. In *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* Deleuze himself provides the reasons why this is perhaps not quite true. Žižek's alignment of Pollock and Deleuze, however, is in itself indicative of Žižek's idea of Deleuze as an 'abstract expressionist' philosopher], Robert Altman, a soviet poster, *The Handmaid's Tale*. If Žižek is invariably in complete control when he talks about Lacan, it sometimes seems that in *Organs Without Bodies* he is running to stay ahead of having to answer his own rhetorical questions. *vis-à-vis* Deleuze, the lightness of Groucho and Co. gives way to the restlessness of Michel Poiccard [a.k.a Laszlo Kovacs] in Jean-Luc Godard's *À bout du Souffle*. At such instances, the book goes fully into a 'fast-forward' mode. Consider Žižek's use of the term 'impersonal machine' to describe the human body. To elucidate this, it might not hurt to slow down a bit and go back to Leibniz, especially to Leibniz' differentiation between artificial and natural machines on which Deleuze comments in detail in *The Fold* and which are crucial to Deleuze's understanding of the body. ["Thus every organic body of a living being is a kind of divine machine or natural automaton, which infinitely surpasses any artificial automaton, because a man-made machine is not a machine in every one of its parts. For example, the tooth of a brass cog-wheel has parts or fragments which to us are no longer anything artificial, and which no longer have anything which relates them to the use for which the cog was intended, and thereby marks them out as parts of a machine. But nature's machines – living bodies, that is – are machines even in their smallest parts, right down to infinity. That is what makes the difference between nature and art, that is, between the divine art and our own." (Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. "Monadology." *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: Philosophical Texts* (Eds. R. Francks & R.S. Woolhouse. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. 267-81. 64)]. Or consider Žižek's claim about Deleuze's 'utopia' of pure intensity. Despite all of Deleuze's disclaimers, Žižek does not stop maintaining that "the ontology of productive Becoming clearly leads to the Leftist topic of the self-organization of the multitude of molecular groups that resist and undermine the molar, totalizing systems of power – the old notion of the spontaneous, nonhierarchical, living multitude opposing the oppressive, reified System, the exemplary case of Leftist radicalism linked to philosophical idealist subjectivism. The problem is that this is the only model of the politicization of Deleuze's thought available" (*Organs* 31). Žižek forgets|neglects to mention that Deleuze constantly

highlights the feedback-loops between de- and reterritorialization; two tendencies that invariably operate together and whose relations following the logic of complex[chaotic] systems [see in this context Deleuze's interest in Serres, Thom and Prigogine]. It is invariably their *complicity* that interests Deleuze. As he advises the reader at the end of the chapter on smooth and striated space in *A Thousand Plateaus*: "Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us (500). Again, however, Žižek cannot stay to consider any of these things, this time because Kevin Warwick from London is just around the corner, the "first cyberman" (*Organs* 16), and a longer digression on man-machine interfaces and intelligent clothing needs to be written].¶ Of course, Žižek doesn't just say these things and 'damn the torpedos.' In fact, these initial, seemingly paradoxical theses contain the main argument of the book. The disarmingly simple answer to the question why Žižek can maintain that the Virtual is on the side of the Real when he himself has only pages before positioned it on the side of the Symbolic is that he can do so because his overall project is to prove precisely that, as I noted in the beginning, the Deleuzian Virtual is for him 'in actual fact' *both* the Symbolic *and* the Real, under the Lacanian condition that the Real *is* ultimately both the impossible outside of the Symbolic *and* its innermost, traumatic [non-sensical] kernel.¶ It is in his discussion of the Virtual that Žižek detects what he considers the "first crack" in Deleuze's edifice: "In a move that is far from self-evident," Žižek notes, Deleuze links the Virtual to "the traditional opposition between production and representation. The virtual field is (re)interpreted as that of generative, productive forces, opposed to the space of representations. Here we get all the standard topics of the molecular multiple sites of productivity constrained by the molar totalizing organizations, and so on and so forth" (19). [Note #2 for a reader's manual: 'and so on and so forth' is Žižek's way of saying that the idea and its implications are both too obvious and too uninteresting to warrant further consideration]. Positing that it was Guattari who prompted Deleuze to link the Virtual to the field of production and the Actual to that of representation ["One is tempted to attribute the 'bad' influence which pushed him towards the second logic to Felix Guattari" (*Organs* 19-20), Žižek notes, using, throughout the book, Guattari as the political 'dummy' whom he opposes to a Deleuze who was "indifferent towards politics" (20)] Žižek rescues Deleuze from this 'simply false' dichotomy only to plunge him, only one paragraph later, all the more deeply into the mire: "was Deleuze not pushed toward Guattari because Guattari presented an alibi, an easy escape from the deadlock of his previous position?" (20). Žižek, therefore, has Deleuze crawl, with Guattari's helping hand, out of a difficult deadlock [*Logic of Sense*] into a simple mistake [*Anti-Oedipus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983)]. Again, one would like to slow things down a bit, because the claim that Deleuze and/or Guattari ever separate these realms, although they do obviously play them out against each other, is hardly tenable. Instead, there is a *topological inclusion* of the field of representation in a more general field of production, the idea being that "the production of recording itself is produced by the production of production" (*Oedipus* 16). In the words of *Pure Immanence*, "Transcendence is always a product of immanence" (New York: Zone Books 2001. 31). As this is Deleuze's position in both *Anti-Oedipus* and *Difference and Repetition*, it is difficult to understand why *Anti-Oedipus* should be "arguably Deleuze's worst book" (*Organs* 20) while *Difference and Repetition* belongs to 'Deleuze proper.' [Just for the record, in both *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, the Virtual|Actual couple is virtually absent. It surfaces in *A Thousand Plateaus* only sporadically in conjunction with the vocabulary of 'planes of consistency,' 'bodies without organs,' and 'planes of immanence.' In *A Thousand Plateaus*, *The Logic of Sense* surfaces a number of times, especially in relation to notions of time [Aion and Chronos] and inrelation to the notion of "events" (*Plateaus* 86). There are presences of *Difference and Repetition* in *Anti-Oedipus*, as when Deleuze & Guattari note that "a false movement ... is produced on the recording surface" (*Oedipus* 10) or when they mention the difference between "passive syntheses" (26, 39) and a "disjunctive synthesis" (39, 75). Both books proceed from the idea that there is invariably an intricate network of feedback-loops and translations between the two modes of production, the aim being to save the operational laws of the 'production of production' from being completely *repressed* in the operational laws of the 'production of recording,' because the law of "the production of recording ... is not the same as that of the production of production" (*Oedipus* 12). If indeed there is a separation – by way of exclusion – between the two realms, it is, according to Deleuze, created by a psychoanalysis that has installed "a classical theater" in the place of "the unconscious as a factory" and in which "representation is substituted for the units of production of the unconscious" (*Oedipus* 24). In is thus psychoanalysis that has "stifled the order of production" by turning it into "[unconscious] *representation*" (296). It is against this "pious conception of the unconscious" (111) that Deleuze and Guattari stake a productive, material unconscious. ["We constantly contrasted two sorts of unconscious, or two interpretations of the unconscious ...the one productive, the other expressive" (381)]. This "unconscious does not speak, it engineers. It is not expressive or representative, but productive" (180) and thus it "belongs to the realm of physics; the body without organs and its intensities are not metaphors, but matter itself" (283). ["The unconscious no longer designates the hidden principle of the transcendent plane of organization, but the process of the immanent plane of consistency as it appears on itself in the course of its construction. For the unconscious must be constructed, not rediscovered" (*Plateaus* 284)]. To define the unconscious as material and machinic calls for a "microphysics" (*Oedipus* 183) of the unconscious rather than a micrometaphysics. The Deleuzian unconscious, as "the Real in itself" (53), is thus staked against an unconscious that follows the "unary stroke of the signifier" (61). Maybe in his criticism Žižek lets himself be taken in too much by more polemically charged moments, as when Deleuze and Guattari note that the aim of schizoanalysis is "to *overturn* the theater of representation into the order of desiring-production" (271, my emphasis). What Deleuze and Guattari advocate in all of their books [in *Anti-Oedipus* they do so in a vocabulary of machines and productions] is thus a field of feedback-loops between a representative and a productive realm; a space in which each realm is 'in actual fact' included in the other. At no time, even within the most vitriolic passages, do Deleuze and Guattari separate physics from metaphysics. The idea is simply that the realm of metaphysics is 'born' from physics. When Deleuze notes in *The Logic of Sense* that "the event subsists in language, but it happens to things. Things and propositions are less in a situation of radical duality and more on the two sides of a frontier represented by sense" (*Logic* 24), this shows very clearly that there is no separation between representation and production in

Deleuze. It is also a first indication that the Deleuzian topology is as complex as the Lacanian one. The fact that Deleuze is not at all about substituting the level of production for that of representation can be seen in such marvelously dead-pan passages as “we do not deny that there is an Oedipal sexuality, an Oedipal heterosexuality and homosexuality, an Oedipal castration, as well as complete objects, global images and specific egos. We deny that these are productions of the unconscious” (*Oedipus* 74). [As an aside, Žižek’s mapping of Deleuze onto ‘empiricocriticism’ should better be directed at theoreticians such as Judith Butler: “What we regard as the material world, nature, the common world, is the product of collectively organized experience, having a social basis” (*Organs* 21), as Žižek quotes Bogdanov, is an eminently un-Deleuzian and therefore an eminently Butlerian position]. Žižek’s statement that ‘molecular multiple sites of productivity [are] being constrained by the molar totalizing organization’ does not at all exclude a sentence such as ‘the molar totalizing organization [are] being contained in the multiple sites of productivity.’¶ So much for Deleuze’s ‘simply stupid’ mistake. But what about his ‘not so stupid’ deadlock? Pointing to what he assumes to be a fundamental aporia in Deleuze’s philosophy, Žižek notes that “either the Sense-Event, the flow of pure Becoming, is the immaterial effect (neutral, neither active nor passive) of the intrication of bodily-material causes, or the positive bodily entities are themselves the product of the pure flow of becoming” (*Organs* 21). Simply put, Žižek asks whether the material causes|generates the mental or whether the mental causes|generates the material? Only one of these statements can be true, this eminently Lacanian question implies, and Deleuze, according to Žižek, consistently fails to provide a consistent solution to this deadlock.¶ To properly address this ‘deadlock,’ one needs to flashback to the context in which the terms event, sense, body [material] and ‘quasi-cause,’ [to which Žižek dedicates a whole chapter] are developed in *The Logic of Sense* and one also needs, unfortunately, to prepare some of the conceptual ground of Deleuze’s argument. So please bear with me for two pages of mathematics.¶ From a spatio-temporal perspective, quasi-causes are the result of a ‘logic of cuts’ that Deleuze models on what in the field of mathematics is called the ‘Dedekind cut.’ ‘Dedekind cuts,’ to which Deleuze refers directly in a number of texts including *Difference and Repetition* (172), denote a mathematical procedure to ‘deal with’ the problem of continuity by way of the concept of infinity; two terms that are the probably most seminal terms in Deleuzian philosophy. Dedekind cuts are named after the German mathematician Richard Dedekind, for whom the realization that a line is separated into two parts by a cut helped solving the problem of how ‘to pass with facility and rigor from the discrete to the continuous and back;’ in purely mathematical terms: of how to make the continuum of *real* numbers countable, and thus representable, in terms of classes of discrete, discontinuous *rational* numbers. As Dedekind states in his paper “Continuity and Irrational Numbers,” in his attempt “to secure a real definition of the essence of continuity. I succeeded Nov. 24, 1858.” [Richard Dedekind. *Essays on the Theory of Numbers* (La Salle: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1984. 2)]. The routine of Dedekind cuts involves “regarding the domain of real numbers as a *continuum*, identifying it as it were with such aggregates as the *totality* of instants in duration, or the *totality* of points on a line” [Tobias Dantzig. *Aspects of Science* (Macmillan: New York, 1937. 102)]. Dedekind proceeds from the image of a straight, continuous line on which the system of rational numbers is noted as, L: (1.2.3...). The mathematical problem is that “in the straight line L there are infinitely many points which correspond to no rational number” (*Continuity* 8), so that “the straight line L is infinitely richer in point-*individuals* than the domain R of rational numbers in number-*individuals*” (9, emphasis added). As Dedekind laconically notes, “the above comparison of the domain R of rational numbers with a straight line has led to the recognition of the existence of gaps” (10). If each rational number is separated from the next one by a gap, Dedekind’s objective is to create so many numbers that “the domain of numbers shall gain again the same completeness, or as we may say at once, the same *continuity*, as the straight line” (*Continuity* 9), his deceptively simple realization being that “if all points of the straight line fall into two classes such that every point of the first class lies to the left of every point of the second class, then there exists one and only one point which produces this division of all points into two classes, this severing of the straight line into two portions” (11). From this realization, Dedekind argues that “for brevity we shall call such a separation a *cut* [Schnitt] ... We can then say that every rational number ... produces one cut” (12-13). The “incompleteness or discontinuity of the domain ... of all rational numbers” (15) consists precisely in that “not all cuts are produced by rational numbers” (15). To re-constitute this continuity, Dedekind defines *irrational* numbers as cuts lying between the cuts produced by rational numbers. In Dedekind’s procedure, therefore, every *rational* and every *irrational* number is literally identical to a cut. From this follows that if one considers the line as an infinity of numbers it once more “possesses ... continuity” (20). The ‘continuous’ line thus becomes ‘identical’ to an infinity of cuts; an infinity of recursive, forever fractally decreasing numerical intervals. This logic of cuts already presides over the birth of infinitesimal calculus in the works of Leibniz, which is another reason why going back to Leibniz is so important in trying to understand Deleuze’s philosophy. As Prigogine|Stengers note: “An infinitesimal quantity is the result of a *limiting process*; it is typically the variation in a quantity occurring between two successive instants when the time elapsing between these instants tends toward zero. In this way the change is broken up into an infinite series of infinitely small changes” [*Order Out of Chaos* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1984. 58)]. Or as Herman Weyl states, Dedekind’s idea is that “the continuum of real numbers can be thought of as created by iterated bipartition” [*Philosophy of Mathematics and Natural Science* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1949. 89)]. As Weyl further notes, “in order to subject a continuum to mathematical treatment it is necessary to assume that it is divided up into ‘elementary pieces’ and that this division is constantly defined by repeated subdivision according to a fixed scheme ... The effect is that the continuum is spun over with a subdivision net of increasing [ultimately infinite] density” (90, my brackets). Dantzig stresses that in order to close the gap, one has to take recourse to a process “of which infinite divisibility may serve as an example.” Through iterated cuts [“the prototype of all infinite process is *iteration*, an indefinite chain of identical operations, each step of which is being applied to the result of the preceding” (99)], “the *irrational* is reduced to the *rational*, the *continuous* to the *discrete*, the *curvilinear* and the *skew* to the *straight* and the *flat*” (28). Paradoxically, mathematical continuity is defined through an infinite number of cuts into an ‘ideal continuity.’ These cuts break up the continuum while at the same time making it countable

as a continuum. It would be tempting to relate these two modes of continuity to Bergson's two multiplicities: "a numerical multiplicity, *discontinuous and actual*" (*Bergsonism* 38) and a multiplicity that "appears only in pure duration" (38). The second one "is a *virtual and continuous* multiplicity that cannot be reduced to numbers" (38). I have gone into such detail not only because this mathematical conceit opens up an immensely rich 'context' for philosophy and psychoanalysis in its evocation of a world of cuts, dis|continuities and infinities [just think of what a Lacanian could do with a mapping of real, irrational and rational numbers onto the fields of the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic], but because Deleuze makes direct use of the Dedekind routine to think the 'difference' between material|physical [unconscious] continuity and sensual|metaphysical [conscious] discontinuity.¶ In a Deleuzian context, what is cut into is no longer a mathematical line, but the only – and repeatedly acknowledged – 'ideal' field in Deleuze; the virtual 'depths' of an eternal present, the time of which Deleuze calls 'Chronos.' [One is tempted to map this realm onto what Lacan in *Encore* (New York: Norton, 1998) calls the realm of the 'first body']. Opening up this 'chronic' present towards duration and thus to a 'difference' between a past and a future that can be so minimally small that it is 'impossible to be thought' – in fact it can be, as a limit, 'infinitely' small [Deleuze's conceit of "a time smaller than thinkable time" has to do with this logic; a logic that in particular informs his notes on the Lucretian *clinamen* in *The Logic of Sense*] – the cut[s] establish a 'chronological' time that Deleuze calls 'Aion' and that is differentiated from chronical time. Deleuze relates the chronic field to a 'pure materialism.' It is a field of "states of affairs" (*Logic* 4) that denote a "living present" (4) made up purely of passions, physical qualities, bodies, tensions and actions (4). To backtrack for a moment to Deleuze's idea of a machinic body. When Žižek notes that "the Deleuzian 'schizo' merrily identifies with this infinitely complex machine that is our body: he experiences this impersonal machine as his highest assertion, rejoicing in its constant tickling" (*Organs* 15) he once again follows the common reading of Deleuze as celebrating the schizophrenic. For Deleuze, the condition of the schizophrenic, however, is anything but light, and 'merrily' must certainly be one of the worst word to describe it. Although it is exceptional, schizophrenia is a grave affliction that implies a fall into chronic depths and thus complete desubjectivation. In this context, maybe too much weight has been put onto the reading of schizo-analysis as relating directly to psychoanalysis. From a machinic and productive angle, schizo-analysis denotes the analysis of human as well as non-human cuts and thus of human and non-human machines, which, because they cut into an ideal continuity, are quite literally cuts; "system[s] of interruptions or breaks ... Every machine, in the first place, is related to a continual material flow (*hylé*) that it cuts into" (*Oedipus* 36). Thus, cuts|sensations [sensations being themselves arrangements of cuts] are the 'reverse side' of production, because "to withdraw a part from the whole, to detach ... is to produce, and to carry out real operations of desire in the material world" (41). As Deleuze notes, "the term *hylé* in fact designates the pure continuity that any sort of matter *ideally* possesses" (36, emphasis added). This 'ideal' of continuity implies to think of matter as on the chronic level folded|continuous rather than as broken down into smallest particles. Deleuze deals with this in his extended ventriloquy of Leibniz in *The Fold*: "a flexible or an elastic body still has cohering parts that form a fold, such that they are not separated into parts of parts but are rather divided into infinity in smaller and smaller folds that always retain a certain cohesion. Thus a continuous labyrinth is not a line dissolving into independent points, as flowing sand might dissolve into grains, but resembles a sheet of paper divided into infinite folds or separated into bending movements, each one determined by the consistent or conspiring surroundings" (6). Or in the original: "The division of the continuous must not be taken as of sand dividing into grains, but as that of a sheet of paper or of a tunic in folds, in such a way that an infinite number of folds can be produced, some smaller than others, but without the body ever dissolving into points or minima" (6). As Deleuze notes in another gloss on Leibniz, this ideal continuity lies in the microscopic|unconscious: "A dust of colored perceptions falls on a black backdrop; yet, if we look closely, these are not atoms, but minuscule folds that are endlessly unfurling and bending on the edges of juxtaposed areas, like a mist or fog that makes their surface sparkle, at speeds that no one of our thresholds of consciousness could sustain in a normal state. But when our clear perceptions are reformed, they draw yet another fold that now separates the conscious from the unconscious ... folds over folds, such is the status of the two modes of perception, or of microscopic and macroscopic processes" (93). A 'return' to the corporeal thus implies a return to the depths of a non-subjective body without organs, while the phantasm 'is' quite literally the organisation of a surface connecting the chronic field to the chronological field and further to the field of representation; a field in which events are now always past or yet to come, while "a pure becoming, on the other hand, would involve both directions at once, a melting-freezing event which never actually occurs, but is "*always forthcoming and already past*" (58)]. The chronic, present present [*hylé*], which is 'eternal,' undivided and ideally 'continuous,' knows only causes. It cannot accommodate a logic of causes and effects for the simple reason that a logic of cause and effect relies on a smallest temporal gap|difference between past and future; on a minimal cut or, in Deleuze's terminology, a minimal machine [Deleuze's philosophy is a philosophy of an infinite number of nano- and macromachines and as such one of the privileged fields to open up the field of nanotechnology to philosophy and to literature [See N. Katherine Hayles. *Nanoculture: Implications of the New Technoscience* (Bristol: Intellect, 2004)]. This is also the context for Deleuze's idea in the eminently Bergsonian *Cinema I* to consider the mind itself as a 'gap|cut,' the germinal idea of which can be found in Bergson: "Thus the brain does not manufacture representations, but only complicates the relationship between a received movement (excitation) and an executed movement (response). Between the two, it establishes an interval" (*Bergsonism* 24)]. On every level, it is invariably *between* the 'fractal cuts' that 'becomings' take place, which means that the logic of becoming follows a fractal logic. The idea of the 'fractal infinity of becoming,' in fact, is why 'becoming imperceptible' is such a positive idea in Deleuze; an idea that is too easily hijacked from the mathematical and philosophical into the merely metaphorical realm. The chronical cannot accommodate such cuts because it is a limit-case. It is a 'senseless' still, a photograph of the world taken with an infinitely short time of exposure.¶ The reasons why Deleuze considers the chronic field as one of 'only causes' and materialities are thus *temporal* and *perceptual*. Events, as perceived|cut movements, result from the movements of things but they are themselves not of the chronic

realm. As Deleuze notes, "the first important duality was that of causes and effects, of corporeal things and incorporeal events" (*Logic* 23).¶ Although the only place where they can subsist [a term that echoes nicely with Lacan] is language, cuts|sense-events happen, according to Deleuze, on all levels of the [dis]organizations taking place in the world that involve perception or consciousness in any way, mode or form. If for Žižek consciousness means strictly human self-consciousness, for Deleuze, as he notes in a text quoted by Žižek, such perceptions or consciousnesses can well be "impersonal" and "prereflexive" (*Organs* 5), such as the minimal perceptions that define what Leibniz calls 'simple monads.' Once more, Leibniz' definition of infinite natural machines can help here because it nicely elucidates the various 'thresholds of perception' and 'thresholds of consciousness' that make up a field that includes simple monads and human monads. As the infinitely and ideally small differentiations that define 'pure Becomings' are part of the Leibnizian logic of a fractal regress into more and more infinitely small cuts|events, they follow a logic of "thresholds of perception" (*Plateaus* 281) and apperception rather than one of causation. This "generalized chromaticism" (97) of perception|consciousness ranges from "unconscious microperepts" (213) to conscious perceptions and it leads to a "micropolitics of perception" (213). Such a general chromatics implies to no longer differentiate clearly between unconscious and conscious levels, because human 'levels of conscious perception' are not fine enough to perceive 'unconscious' cuts in fields that are therefore 'consciously' perceived as 'ideally continuous' rather than as discontinuous, although, if conscious perception could zoom deeper into these fields, it would become aware that on finer, deeper levels, these 'continuous' fields are of course discontinuous arrangements of cuts. [See in this context also Deleuze's idea of 'non-human sexuality' in *Anti-Oedipus*]. Although the psychic field is thus the *proper* "field of integration," cuts and sense-events cannot be *reduced* to the field of the psychic. What makes psychic perception so fascinating is that it operates according to a differential logic that brings about a simultaneous differentiation and connection between the continuous|discrete and thus between the unconscious|conscious: "differential calculus is the psychic mechanism of perception, the automatism *that at once and inseparably plunges into obscurity and determines clarity: a selection of minute, obscure perceptions and a perception that moves into clarity*" (*Fold* 90, emphasis added). The purely physical, chronic realm, in opposition, operates according to cuts that organize and produce niveaus of intensities and tectonic shifts in material arrangements but which do not include processes of mathematical|perceptual 'integration.' While differential calculus is a "psychic mechanism" (96), physical mechanisms "do not work by differentials, which are always differentials of consciousness, but by communication and propagation of movement" (97). The difference is thus between "the psycho-metaphysical mechanism of perception, and the „physico-organic mechanism of excitation or impulsion" (97). The passages between continuity [a.k.a. the analog] and 'dis'continuity [a.k.a. the digital] are thus defined as processes of zooming in or out of fractal dimensions, with the physical on one end and the psychic on the other. Through psychic differentializations, parts of the plane of immanence are folded into|onto what Deleuze and Guattari call a 'plane of transcendence|organization' and *vice versa*.¶ It is in the sense of expressing sub-propositional and pre-subjective ["pre-individual, non-personal, and a-conceptual" (*Logic* 52)] levels of perception|consciousness that Deleuze considers effects|sense|events as "neutral" (19), "impassive ... sterile" (20) and "indifferent to opposites" (35) [Juggling a number of concepts, Žižek calls this field, which seems to truly and completely puzzle him "the sterility of the incorporeal becoming of the Sense-Event" (*Organs* xi)]. Logically, events make up an non-essential field of singularities ["to reverse Platonism is first and foremost to remove essences and to substitute events in their place, as jets of singularities" (*Logic* 53)] ; a field that Deleuze also calls a 'multiplicity. Topologically, events differ from actions|causes|bodies as surface differs from depth. Although they are *not* chronic causes, however, events *play the role* of causes within the chronological field, which is why Deleuze talks of of them as quasi-causes. Causes and quasi-causes relate to each other as the "destiny" (*Logic* 169) that defines the chronic depths and the effects|sense-events that define and happen on the chronological surface.¶ In the passage|translation from chronic depths to chronological surface the material realm is thus not given up. Rather, on the surface of sense material bodies are linked to immaterial relations between them, to events and to modes of their perception, [At this point, one might talk more about Deleuze's relation – via people like Leibniz, Spinoza and La Mettrie – to what might be called an 'intelligent materialism'] which means that the operational logic of the quasi-cause and of the relation between matter and mind is not, as Žižek implies, that of *replacement*, *opposition* or *causation* but simply of a change of *topological* registers. The addition of chronological time, and with it pre- and postsubjective forms of perception|consciousness, causes a *topological* movement from a world of depth to a world of surface[s].¶ For every machinic aggregate, events happen in chronological space and time, which 'is' the virtual, chronical realm if you add to it the registers of perception|consciousness [In fact, Deleuze thinks of this 'addition' as a 'subtraction']. In other words. the chronological is the virtual as actualized. It is the field of conscious|unconscious, human|non-human machinic integrations and material 'impulses.'¶ Long story short: Žižek's 'deadlock' theory misses the Deleuzian point because it implies that the relation between sense-events – the fact that he talks about 'the event' rather than 'eventuality in general' may be an echo of his reading of Badiou – and bodies is one of causation and thus of ontology. The difference between event [the chronological quasi-cause] and body [the chronic cause] – immaterial effects and material causes – however is not the one between a *causation* or a *generation* of body from mind or *vice versa*. Rather, it has to do with two different *topologies* of time that concern the same field, once as infinitely cut and once as ideally continuous; once as virtual [chronic and without any form of perception|consciousness] and once as actual [chronological and traversed by an infinite number of levels and forms of perception|consciousness]. The ideal, unthinkable, chronical time is that of a smallest, no longer divisible moment; an eternally short, unthinkable moment of pure, a-subjective life [Being]. [For more of this, one would once more have to go to the appendix on the *clinamen* in *The Logic of Sense* and to books such as Michel Serres' *The Birth of Physics* (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2000)]. The chronic moment is the only moment when material causes and immaterial effect are *not* 'always already' intimately linked [Becoming]. But!, Žižek, the tortoise to my hare, would point out: isn't that chronic moment precisely the moment of the Lacanian Real? Which only shows that



maybe we have not yet reached the level of the basic misunderstanding|difference, which concerns semiotics and the elusive concept of reality.

## semiotics

Let's provisionally identify the Virtual, chronic realm with the Lacanian Real [remember that Žižek does precisely that!] and park it somewhere for later pick-up. This leaves us with the Actual, chronological surface [the plane of immanence]; an infinitely complex, dynamic architecture of cuts and organizations. A multiplicity embodied in a material, itself entirely informed substratum. As this multiplicity is quite literally a multiplicity of embodies signs and signals, it can neither be reduced to 'simple' matter nor to a pure, immaterial field of information. A crucial Deleuzian point is that much of the information and its channels of transfer that traverses the chronological surface cannot be modeled on the double articulation of human language and thus on the 'logic and the materiality of the signifier'. ['Individuation' happens produced autopoietically within systems without being represented for and by a logically, structurally and spatially separated, organizing part of that system, which means that autopoiesis happens without a 'conscious' agency of global integration. In *The Fold* Deleuze deals with this in terms of the difference between 'being' and 'having' a body]. The chronological surface is pervaded by both natural *and* artificial regimes of signs, semiotic aggregates, tendencies, force-fields and dynamisms of which human and non-human systems partake both passively and actively; as affected|affecting. In fact, human and non-human systems are often, as in the case of the 'human aggregate,' recursively boxed into each other. As cuts operate on a thousand plateaus simultaneously, they are by no means the privilege of human consciousness [Symptomatically, Deleuze states that "Bergson does not use the word "unconscious" to denote a psychological reality outside consciousness, but to denote a nonpsychological reality – being as it is in itself" (*Bergsonism* 56). Similarly, there is an "impersonal time" (82) thought of as 'unity:' "duration as virtual multiplicity is this single ... Time" (83)]. The chronological surface is thus a dynamic aggregate of infinitely many events; a complexity|multiplicity, a cluster of self-regulating, interconnected machines. As the psychic apparatuses remain a part of that field even while on some levels they function as the agencies that *separate* the human aggregate from this field, the psychic subject remains a part of – or immanent to – the field's overall dynamics. Simply put, Deleuze stakes the notion of a closed-off 'psychic reality' against 'physical reality' plus 'psychic reality' which makes: a 'lived reality' that goes beyond this closure.¶ While for Lacan, the unconscious is 'structured like a language' and thus fully part of the field of representation [“On the one hand, the unconscious ... something negative, something ideally inaccessible. On the other hand it is something quasi real. Finally, it is something which will be realized in the symbolic ... something which ... *will have been*.” (*The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book I: Freud's Paper on Technique 1953-54* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988. 158)], for Deleuze the unconscious is 'structured like a machine' and thus part of the realm of imperceptible cuts. Serres has provided an extremely elegant version of such a both eminently physical and eminently informed unconscious 'in fractal descent': "At this point the unconscious gives way from below [recedes into the depths]; there are as many unconsciousnesses in the system as there are integration levels. It is merely a question, in general, of that for which we initially possess no information. ... Each level of information functions as an unconscious for the global level bordering it ... What remains unknown and unconscious is, at the chain's furthest limit, the din of energy transformations: this must be so, for the din is by definition stripped of all meaning, like a set of pure signals or aleatory movements. These packages of chance are filtered, level after level, by the subtle transformer constituted by the organism ... In this sense the traditional view of the unconscious would seem to be the final black box, the clearest box for us since it has its own language in the full sense" (Michel Serres. *Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1982. 80).¶ Even if we disregard the question of the Real|Virtual therefore, we are still faced with a decisive difference between the semiotics of the Lacanian [un]conscious, which is positioned on the 'plane|surface of language' – the final black box – and the semiotics of the Deleuzian [un]conscious, which is positioned on the itself fractal chronological plane|surface [the full multiplicity of boxes]. For Žižek, a semiotics is invariably a *significant* one, for Deleuze it is both productive *and* significant. For Žižek, sense is related only to the law of the signifier, for Deleuze, it is a hinge between productive and representational levels|cuts. According to Deleuze, "the question here is not whether there are signs on every stratum but whether all signs are signifiers" (*Plateaus* 65), a question that calls for different semiotics of "natural codings operating without signs" (117). Ultimately, on these levels, "writing ... functions on the same level as the real, and the real materially writes" (141). According to this logic, one can no longer separate "coded milieus and formed substances" (502). Deleuze develops the conceit of the 'surface of sense' precisely to relate the realm of human|psychic cuts and the imperceptible, unconscious realm of 'nonhuman cuts.' Thought of as a membrane, the surface of sense relates the field of language and propositionality – "denotation, manifestation and signification" (*Logic* 12) to the field of non-human cuts. Although sense is inherent to language and produced by it, it functions as a hinge between "*the expressed of the proposition*" (22) [a.k.a. representations] and "states of affairs" (22) [a.k.a. productions]. It aligns words and bodies|things without being reducible to either one. Deleuze differentiates, therefore, between the world of language and human consciousness, and a much larger world, of which human consciousness is part and parcel. From which, in fact, it emerges through a series of complex processes of 'individuation.'¶ Although the concept of the individual as a dynamic, machinic aggregate sounds quite different from the Lacanian definition of the subject as "a signifier is that which represents the subject for another signifier" [*Écrits: A Selection* (New York: Norton, 1977) 316], there are a number of elective affinities between Deleuze and Lacan in the way that the surface of sense encompasses the field of language. In fact, in the closing, eminently Lacanian passages of *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze notes that "the phallus *plays the role* of the quasi cause" (210, emphasis added). In *Bodies without Organs* this actually sounds as if it was Žižek's argument *against* Deleuze – "Is this [the phallus standing for an 'organ without body'] not a further argument for the claim that Deleuze's quasi cause is his name for the Lacanian 'phallic signifier?' (81); "Lacan appreciated so much *The Logic of Sense*: is the deleuzian quasi-cause not the

exact equivalent of Lacan's *objet petit a*, this pure, immaterial, spectral entity that serves as the object-cause of desire?" (26). It can play this role because it can stand for an organization of surfaces, from sexual to symbolized reality along 'phallic non-sense' [signifier of the signifier]. But quasi-causes also refer to sub-representative and sub-conceptual levels, which is where Deleuze parts from Lacan. To state that the phallus can 'play the role' of a quasi-cause does not automatically imply the instigation of the logic of the signifier as the 'only' one. Neither does it imply the reduction of an inherently multiplicitous field [n-1] to a field organized by one global logic [n+1] whose hegemony is instigated by a specific spatio-temporal logic. In other words, Deleuze argues against a phallic ontology [an essential phallogocentrism] although he acknowledges the 'probability' and the 'reality' of the phallic organization on local levels. In fact, all of Deleuze's polemics are ultimately directed against the concept of phallic castration understood as the result of the full inauguration of a closed discursive universe [including its conscious| representational unconscious] that is based on an originary lack. What Žižek means, like Deleuze, by "organ without body" (84) is indeed the opposite to a "body without organs;" the phallus as the signifier of castration. Spinoza's joy, as Žižek rightly notes, is definitely not the joy of the acceptance of phallic castration.¶ What Deleuze argues against, then, is not the representational, psychic realm as such, but the idea that this realm can be completely separated|cut off from the realm of physical reality. The danger is that of representation 'going global' and creating a unified, consistent field of representation ["We should understand that representation ... when it becomes subjective infinite ... effectively loses all consistency" (*Oedipus* 305) if it does not instigate, immediately, a symbolic order to give it an internal consistency] that considers itself infinite, which means 1. without an 'outside' and, 2. without a material body. Because a field of representation that is, like the house of Tessier-Ashpool [William Gibson. *Neuromancer* (London: Gollancz, 1984)], completely closed in on itself is 'always already' a field of "mediation" (*Difference* 8), it can only create a "false movement" (10). Because it operates by "concepts" (10) whose logic is based on identity, analogy, opposition and resemblance (29) it inevitably produces a "convergent" (68) system. Against this realm, Deleuze stakes a realm that operates with "simulacra" (126) and "natural" (77) or "direct" (77) signs, rather than representations and artificial signs (77); a realm that is divergent rather than "convergent" (68), based on ("extra-propositional and sub-representative" (267)) ideas rather than concepts, "unconscious" (108) rather than conscious (192). It gives space to "local integrations" (98) rather than one global integration (98). It is "positive" rather than negative. It is "first" rather than "second."

#### the material body

Obviously, the 'problem' of the material body is of fundamental importance in Deleuze's philosophy. As he notes in *Cinema II*, "the body is no longer the obstacle that separates thought from itself, that which it has to overcome to reach thinking. It is on the contrary that which it plunges into or must plunge into, in order to reach the unthought, that is life. Not that the body thinks, but, obstinately and stubborn, it forces us to think, and forces us to think what is concealed from thought, life. Life will no longer be made to appear before the categories of thought; thought will be thrown into the categories of life. The categories of life are precisely the attitudes of the body, its postures ... To think is to learn what a non-thinking body is capable of, its capacity, its postures" (189). In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze calls the attempt to close discourse off from the material world and to relegate life 'into the negative' the "greatest effort of philosophy" (262): to "render ... representation infinite (orgiastic)" (262). Which brings us back to Hegel. The main reason why *Difference and Repetition* is suffused by an anti-Hegelian rhetoric is that Hegel is Deleuze's shorthand for a representational system gone 'infinite'.¶ Again however, Deleuze's idea is not to simply replace the representational level by the level of production – this is once more the idea that has given rise to the popular image of Deleuze as the prophet of anarchy – but to think of how the second can come to exist 'out of' and 'within' the first and how the first can be made to remain operative|subsisting in the second. According to Deleuze, the basic mistake does not lie in creating the representational realm ['planes of transcendence'], but in cutting it off from the productive one by one fundamental cut, such as the famously Lacanian one. To state that it can only relate to the productive realm negatively as a 'nothingness' – an argument that is of course completely consistent from within its own logic; obviously language can relate to anything outside of itself only as 1. a negativity and 2. through [more of] 'itself' – disregards a multiplicity of minute organizations and individuations that are constantly at play imperceptibly|unconsciously. The aim of Deleuze's critique is thus directed against any philosophical system that maintains that the productive realm is present in the representational realm only as fundamentally cancelled. In order to think such a field in which production is positively productive one has 1. to stop thinking in terms of stable, general ideas and abstract concepts and 2. to think a positive multiplicity out of which the realm of representation|thought autopoietically emerges.¶ While Deleuze's project is to think the relation between production and representation, Žižek's project is to think an infinite representation. While Deleuze aims at including 'intelligent matter' into his semiotics, Žižek wants to purify information by subtracting matter from it, which brings us back to Deleuze's 'deadlock'. Remember that Žižek's problem was that either the immaterial field causes the material one or that the material field causes the immaterial one. Žižek, in good Lacanian fashion, comes down squarely on the side of an immaterial realm that causes the material one in the sense that it 'produces it through representations'. He negotiates Deleuze's 'deadlock' via the process of the reduction of matter to nothingness|zero. Although he builds up an impressive phalanx of help for this project – "the digital information revolution, the biogenetic revolution and the quantum revolution in physics" (24) – the game Žižek plays is merely the upgraded version of the old Lacanian one. According to Žižek, who relies heavily on Badiou, if one can *reduce* living matter to processes of information one can then isolate a rest; a field of 'anorganic chemistry' – the 'dead matter' that provides the materials that can be used for any number of ideological purposes – from the realm of 'pure information in a void'. Somewhat ironically, in this move Žižek comes close to propose what Derrida has called a 'materialism without matter.' "Materialism is not the assertion of inert material density of matter in its humid heaviness," Žižek notes, "such a 'materialism' can always serve as a support for gnostic obscurantism. In contrast to it, a true materialism

joyously assumes the "disappearance of matter" (24); the fact that there is "only void" (24). Now 'inert material density of matter in its humid heaviness' does not sound much like a description of Deleuze's 'intelligent materialism.' It does not describe adequately the chronological, complexly structured and inherently superficial field of the sense-event. What it does sound more like is a description of the chronic realm under the condition that this realm is no longer an unthinkable virtuality but the actualized lagoon from which the Deleuzian 'swamp monster' emerges into the town of philosophy. In other words, Žižek, quite predictably, reads the 'plane of immanence' as the chronic depths which he then identifies as the Lacanian Real. Deleuze positions the chronic realm in a similarly 'unapproachable' position for the subject as Lacan does the Real [the notion of the subject, however, is something completely different in Deleuze because, on many levels, it 'contains' the chronic]. But even the chronological realm is much more inclusive than the field of the signifier, because it includes intelligent matter down to almost infinitely small, unconscious levels ["substances are nothing but formed matter. Forms imply a code, modes of coding and decoding" (TP 41)]. According to Žižek, Deleuze remains indebted to 'such a materialism' because of his "vitalism" (28), which is of course only true if Žižek's reading of the plane of immanence is correct. Once Deleuze has been painted into the corner of such a false materialism it is easy to oppose his naive belief in a 'simple oneness' to a 'more sober' belief in the proposition that "there is only Nothing" (26), a statement that nicely resonates with Bergson's idea that 'there is always Something.' According to Žižek, the Hegelian|Lacanian project implies to think "a positive notion of lack" (34): Hegel's and Lacan's "positivization" of negativity itself" (50) actually creates something out of nothing. Badiou develops this 'creation ex nihilo' via set-theory. This is what Spinoza had missed, which is why Žižek cannot really love Spinoza: "What eludes it is a positive notion of lack, a 'generative' absense" (*Organs* 34). In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze deals extensively with the notion of negation and lack: "In the idea of nonbeing there is in fact the idea of being, plus a logical operation of generalized negation, plus the particular psychological motive for that operation (such as when a being does not correspond to our expectation and we grasp it purely as lack, the absense of what interests us" (*Bergsonism* 17). He comments in particular on Bergson's "critique of the negative and of negation, in all its forms as sources of false problems" (18). According to Bergson|Deleuze, "differentiation is never a negation but a creation ... difference is never negative but essentially positive and creative" (103). If in Žižek's reduction of informational processes to purely mathematized "immaterial processes" (*Organs* 24) there are only mathematics and the void, in Deleuze, there are only the physical mathematics of living matter.

#### hegel

Notwithstanding Deleuze's 'misreadings' and 'stupifications' of Hegel, the lithmus test of Žižek's book is whether one can indeed read Hegel as an advocate of a universal autopoietics and thus of Deleuzian immanence or whether one should read the Hegelian project as directed at the closure of a self-contained psychic realm. If Hegel is an advocate of a universal autopoietics, then Deleuze is indeed wrong in differentiating himself from Hegel.

#### immanence

If the Hegelian question cannot be answered without going deeply into Hegelian philosophy, let's see whether Žižek reads Hegel as the advocate of a universal autopoietics and immanence. Žižek relates Deleuze's "becoming Hegel" (50) directly to Deleuze's notion of immanence, which constitutes a "subterranean link" (51) between the two. Žižek's claim is that "if there ever was a philosopher of unconditional immanence, it is Hegel" (51), which means that there is really no difference between Deleuze and Hegel because Hegel is 'always already' Deleuze. Unfortunately, Hegel's immanence – and here comes what I take to be the single most crucial sentence of Žižek's book – is "the immanence of *our* thought" (51, emphasis added), which means that it has absolutely nothing to do with Deleuze's concept of immanence. One really wonders how Žižek could have missed this obvious fact, as if he would stand in front of the Deleuzian map, unable to find the names written across it in giant letters! One is tempted here to quote Žižek against himself, although the context is different: "This insight seems so obvious, stating it seems so close to what the French call a *lapalissade*, that one is surprised how it has not yet been generally perceived" (20). In the first consequences chapter "Science: Cognitivism with Freud" Žižek talks about the split between inside and outside, noting that "the subject emerges when the 'membrane,' the surface that delimits the Inside from the Outside ... starts to function as their active mediator" (124). While Deleuze would agree, relating these mediations to 'processes of individuation.' What Žižek follows from this, however, is eminently anti-Deleuzian. To state that "the problem is not (only) how to pass from preorganic matter to life, but how life itself can break its autopoietic closure and ex-statically start to relate to its external other" (126) implies a fundamental separation|gap between life in general, or 'a life' (whose dynamics are 'autopoietically closed') and 'human life' (which is 'its external other'), which is thus identified with consciousness. For Deleuze, autopoietic processes define not only language [an eminently Lacanian point, as Lacan's afterword to his reading of "The Purloined Letter" testifies ["Présentation de la suite et Parenthèse de parenthèses." *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966) 41-61], but the whole surface of the sense-event. ["There can only be a simultaneous genesis of matter and intelligence" (*Bergsonism* 88)]. In Deleuzian terms: the Hegelian 'immanence of our thought' is a plane of transcendence within a much more inclusive 'plane of immanence.' What Hegelian immanence does have to do with – and by now this should not come as a surprise – is the Real, which is "not simply external to the symbolic, but, rather, the Symbolic itself deprived of its externality, of its founding exception" (*Organs* 52). Consciousness, Deleuze maintains, cannot itself be separated from its environs and from other processes of intelligent matter [a.k.a. a general, anonymous life]. In Žižek's reading of Hegel, immanence heralds the closure of consciousness onto itself, in Deleuze it heralds an opening of a 'machinic consciousness' to an infinity of other machines. In an extended meditation on ethics, Žižek, order to inaugurate an 'ethics of castration,' has to read biological and chemical processes as following a logic of pure contingency ["the utterly meaningless Real

of contingency" (*Organs* 130), "blind genetic contingency" (131)) and thus of pure chaos rather than a 'deterministic chaos.' Žižek comes to the conclusion that "faced with the genome I am nothing *and this nothing is the subject itself*" (138). ¶ At this point, Žižek's 'provocative' statements about the Virtual make perfect Lacanian sense, because once it is the Symbolic, it is also the Real and *vice versa*. If the Real is "an *absolutely inherent* limitation" (103), the Hegelian immanence of thought designates precisely the fields of the Symbolic *and* of the Real. If, as Žižek claims, Deleuze is more Hegelian than he would like to believe, this means that the Deleuzian Virtual can be integrated – via Hegel – into the Lacanian topology. To wrap this incorporation up, all Žižek needs to do now is to integrate the Virtual into the Lacanian temporality of *Nachträglichkeit*: Simply and temporally put, Hegelian "immanence is not the starting point but the conclusion" (59). Always within the dimension of the barred subject, immanence "designates the *reemergence of the virtual in the order of actuality*" (66). Like the trauma and like infinity, virtuality is fundamentally *nachträglich*. Mission accomplished.¶ If Hegel's immanence indeed stands in direct opposition to Deleuze's immanence, it is Žižek's *misunderstanding* of Deleuze that allows him to identify the two, while it is Deleuze's *understanding* of Hegel that causes him to differentiate his project fundamentally from that of Hegel. This claim, of course, calls for a close analysis of what the plane of immanence is for Deleuze. The concept of the plane of immanence, which shows many similarities to the surface of sense, is extremely complex. It is an inherently dynamic field over which fluxes, forces and intensities ["continuums of intensity, blocs of becoming, emissions of particles, combinations of fluxes" (Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet. *Dialogues* (New York: Columbia UP, 2002. 105))], travel at various speeds and in various alignments. The plane of immanence is 'virtuality in real-time,' a field "peopled by anonymous matter, by infinite bits of impalpable matter entering into varying connections" (*Plateaus* 255). It "has haecceities for content" (263), it is the true "body without organs" (154); a space of "positive absolute deterritorialization" (134) and of "uninterrupted continuum" (154). Its most important characteristics are 1. its unilaterality, 2. its "variable curvature" [Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994. 39)], 3. its "fractal nature" (39) and 4. the "infinite speed" (42) with which particles move over it. The first characteristic defines it as a one-sided 'projective plane' – a mathematical concept that denotes an infinite space that is folded back onto itself at what are called 'points at infinity,' and which therefore has only one side. In his book *Vorlesungen über Nicht-Euklidische Geometrie* (Springer: Berlin, 1928), Felix Klein describes the projective plane as a hemisphere with a line at infinity added to the rim ["We should attempt to imagine the projective situation long enough for it to be no longer too difficult to, for instance, pull some figure through the infinitely far away" (17)] on which opposite points are identified: "To every infinitely far away point of the plane there correspond ... two points at the rim of the half-sphere; therefore, we have to regard ... two of such diametrically opposed points as identical" (14). As Klein notes, "the simplest plane ... that shows the same behaviour as the projective plane" (15) is a möbius-strip. Its 'infinite torsion|fold' which is defined by the *topologies* of the points at infinity on the projective plane fundamentally undecides the notions of inside and outside. The overall topology, which folds these extremes into each other and lays them out on the same plane|surface, is thus fundamentally unilateral ["the extreme can be defined by the infinite, in the small or in the large. The infinite, in this sense, even signifies the identity of the small and the large, the identity of extremes" (*Difference* 42)], which means that opposites should be thought in relation to a ground [the projective plane] on which they are identified. The second characteristic defines it as a plane whose every locale is spatially irregular and which is thus 'always and everywhere' singular [a sphere, for instance, has a nonvariable curvature]. [See here in particular the use Deleuze makes of Bernard Cache: *Earth Moves: The Furnishing of Territories* (Cambridge: MIT, 2001)]. The third characteristic defines it as a space made up of infinitely many plateaus situated on a fractal number of dimensions. In this context, one model|schema of matter is that of a 'fractal sponge,' whose structure is defined by an infinite regress|recursivity. "an infinitely cavernous or porous world ... Mandelbrot's fractal dimension as a fractional or irrational number, a nondimension, an interdimension" (*Fold* 16). Deleuze links mathematical fractality specifically to the philosophical problem of infinity: "it is this fractal nature that makes the phenomenon an infinite that is always different from any surface or volume determinable as a concept. Every movement passes through the whole of the plane by immediately turning back on and folding itself and also folding other movements or allowing itself to be folded by them, giving rise to retroactions, connections, and proliferations in the fractalization of this infinitely folded up infinity" (*Philosophy* 38-39). The plane is thus inherently superficial: "the continuity between reverse and right side replaces all the levels of depths" (*Logic* 11). In order to think the 'transfers' between these fractal plateaus [microsurfaces and macrosurfaces], Deleuze and Guattari employ notions of infinite scales and scalings. There can be no true end to the scale because true continuity implies infinity, which is where the notion of 'infinite speed' becomes important. The fourth aspect of the plane of immanence is that it is not only spatially infinite [a projective plane] but also temporally infinite [particles that move over it are ideally infinitely fast]. This characteristic defines it as fundamentally dynamic|kinetic and it implies that movement on some of its levels happens too fast to be thought, which means that the mind is not only a machine of reduction but also one of deceleration. "The link between consciousness and complexity does not reside in the fact that 'when things become too complex, consciousness has to enter,' but, on the contrary, that consciousness is the medium of the radical simplification of the complexity" (*Organs* 142). Although for Žižek this concerns 'psychic complexity,' the idea is eminently Deleuzian because Žižek, like Deleuze, considers the mind as a machine of reduction. As he states in *Bergsonism*, "perception is not the object *plus* something, but the object minus something" (24-5) and further, linking the mind to bifurcation-points and thus to multiplicity, openness and to a deterministic chaos, the brain "divides up excitation infinitely" (52) and "in relation to the motor cells of the core it leaves us to choose between several possible reactions" (53). Deleuze and Guattari develop their notion of infinite speed from the fact that the 'virtual' movements that ideally define it follow the dynamics of a deterministic chaos. ["in fact, chaos is characterized less by the absence of determinations than by the infinite speed with which they take shape and vanish" (*Philosophy* 42). In this context, "chaos is defined not so much by its disorder as by the infinite speed with which every form taking shape in it vanishes ... chaos is an infinite speed of birth and

disappearance" (118). Infinitely small, unconscious perceptions move over the plane of immanence with infinite speed [at the speed of chaos], while conscious perceptions are defined by being no longer infinitely small and no longer infinitely fast. ["From a psychic point of view, chaos would be a universal giddiness, the sum of all possible perceptions being infinitesimal or infinitely minute; but the screen would extract differentials that could be integrated in ordered perceptions" (*Fold* 77). Or, as Guattari states, the "plane of machinic interfaces" (*Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995. 58)) is defined by "a deterministic chaos animated by infinite velocities. It is out of this chaos that complex compositions, which are capable of being slowed down in energetico-spatio-temporal coordinates or category systems, constitute themselves" (59)]. It is always on this fundamentally multiplicitous plane that human movement [spanned out between the physical and the psychic] takes place. Via the reductive machines of perception|consciousness, the subject machine cuts into this plane and assembles specific arrangements. Part of subjectivation consists of 1. assembling the illusion of bilaterality for the subject [this happens through the agency of the skin-ego, which projects|refracts the physical borders of the body into the psychic realm where it creates a similarly 'closed' form|system] and 2. of slowing down the infinite speed of the virtual through specific actualisations. In this way, one creates planes of consistency within the plane of immanence: "It is only in appearance that a plane of this kind 'reduces' the number of dimensions; for it gathers in all the dimensions to the extent that *flat multiplicities* – which nonetheless have an *increasing or decreasing number of dimensions* – are inscribed upon it...Far from reducing the multiplicities' number of dimensions to two, the *plane of consistency* cuts across them all, intersects them in order to bring into coexistence any number of multiplicities, with any number of dimensions. The plane of consistency is the intersection of all concrete forms...The only question is: Does a given becoming reach that point?" As such, the plane of consistency "has nothing to do with a ground buried deep within things, nor with an end or a project in the mind of God" (*Plateaus* 254). Inscribed on the plane of consistency are "*haecceities*, events, incorporeal transformations that are apprehended in themselves; *nomadic essences*, vague yet riotous; *continuums of intensities* or continuous variations ... *becomings*, which have neither culmination nor subject, but draw one another into zones of undecidability; *smooth spaces*; composed from within striated space" (507). As the space of chaotic machines, the plane of immanence is, somewhat like Freud's 'interior foreign country' ['inneres Ausland,' Sigmund Freud. *Studienausgabe Bd XV* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1971. 62)], "that which must be thought and that which cannot be thought. It is the nonthought within thought. It is the base of all planes, immanent to every thinkable plane that does not succeed in thinking it. It is the most intimate within thought and yet the absolute outside. An outside more distant than any external world: it is immanence" (*Philosophy* 59). Although Lacan would say the same about the Real, the difference between these concepts lies in the modality of the inside|outside logic.¶ If one considers the plane of immanence as the underlying field of multiplicity, virtuality and potentiality from which forms are actualised, this calls for an opening up of culture to its ecological surrounds. As Deleuze states, "the interactions which organisms have with the organic and inorganic components of an ecosystem are typically of the intensive kind (in the enlarged sense), an ecosystem itself being a complex assemblage of a large number of heterogeneous components: diverse reproductive communities of animals, plants and micro-organisms, a geographical site characterized by diverse topographical and geological features, and the ever diverse and changing weather patterns." [Some of this meteorological and chaotic|complex context can maybe be felt in Lacan's aperçu that the unconscious looks 'like Baltimore in the early morning']. The material realm in which production proceeds is thus neither defined by the logical negativity of the Lacanian Real, nor by the stability of an essential form|order. Rather, it is a positive, intensive field that cannot be separated from the countless processes of production that pass through it on all levels; and this includes the production of sense. It is a field of a fundamental multiplicity and potentiality. The various movements of formation|production taking place on it are dynamic, 'sensitive to initial conditions' – this is why Deleuze and Guattari talk of this plane as being in a state of 'unstable equilibrium' – and, at each moment, open to unexpected changes and catastrophes, which means that the field follows the operations of a deterministic chaos. ["The universe is made up of modifications, disturbances, changes of tension and of energy, and nothing else" (*Bergsonism* 76)]. On the plane of immanence various machines unfold, through a number of routines, branching out dynamically into complex morphogenetic architectures and orders. Seen from this perspective, the human body – which literally is nothing but its development, because it is defined as a constant becoming rather than as a static being – consists of a series of un|folding routines, some of which can catastrophically develop into 'other bodies,' which means that through small variations|bifurcations, the folding sequence can shift into different parameters|attractors. From this field|space of virtualities singular facts and events or series are actualised. Deleuze defines the pure event – which is comparable to a catastrophic bifurcation point in the sense of René Thom – as pure freedom, because it implies this pure multiplicity. In this context, schizoanalysis is an attractoranalysis; an analysis of bifurcation points that aims at breaking the symmetry of molar machines and thus bringing about threshold moments and passages between specific systems and specific lines of flight. The multiplex logic of actualisations is responsible for change, a change that is more inclusive and certainly more radical than change thought of in merely cultural|representational registers. One of the lessons cultural studies might learn from Deleuze's theory of change|newness is, in fact, that the fields of performativity and hybridity will have to be thought of as including the machinic plateau of a physical unconscious. If they do not, they will invariably remain caught in a purely representational, and thus molar logic.¶ There are many ways to approach|accommodate the plane of immanence and various disciplines, such as philosophy, science and art deal differently with its spatio-temporal infinities. Each discipline, in fact, has developed different processes of cutting the plane and of slowing down elements travelling on it, which means, ultimately, that they negotiate the unconscious in different ways: "By retaining the infinite, philosophy gives consistency to the virtual through concepts; by relinquishing the infinite, science gives reference to the virtual, which actualises it through functions. Philosophy proceeds with a plane of immanence or consistency; science with a plane of reference. In the case of science it is like a freeze-frame" (*Philosophy* 118) while art creates "a plane of composition that is able to restore the infinite" (203)

["plane of immanence of philosophy, plane of composition of art, plane of reference or coordination of science; form of concept, force of sensation, function of knowledge; concepts and conceptual personae, sensations and aesthetic figures, figures and partial observers" (216)]. While philosophy integrates the infinite and thus the continuous in the sense of including it and being open to it, classical science integrates continuity mathematically in order to make it calculable, functional and thus finite. There is no unconscious to classical science, one might say; or, science represses the continuous/unconscious. In this sense, chaos theory might be said to open up science to the unconscious. Generally, if "the philosopher brings back from chaos [...] variations that are still infinite but that have become inseparable on the absolute surface" (202), the scientist "brings back from the chaos variables that have become independent by slowing down ... finite coordinates on a secant plane of reference" (202) while the artist "brings back from the chaos varieties that no longer constitute a reproduction of the sensory in the organ but set up a being of the sensory ... on an anorganic plane of composition that is able to restore the infinite" (203). ¶ Ultimately, what is important is the 'difference' of the general topology of Deleuze and Lacan. In this context, it is interesting that both rely on the topology of unilateral space embodied by the projective plane. While the 'two sides' of the projective plane designate for Lacan the field of the signifier [the materiality of language] and of the signified [the ideality of sense] respectively, with the Real nothing but the twist that inaugurates the topology, in Deleuze, they designate the conjunction of the field of discourse [the signifier|signified couple] and of representation on the one side and intelligent matter on the other. Ironically, the Deleuzian topology – which is of course in many ways a 'critical response' to the Lacanian one – is to a large extent developed in *The Logic of Sense*, one of the books Žižek's argument is centered on. In fact, the surface of sense is quite literally a projective plane.

#### critical events

Maybe the difference between Deleuze and Lacan can be felt best in the way that they think 'pure life': Žižek – as well as Agamben, one might note – can only think of 'pure life' as an extraordinary event, such as the moment of a terrible, violent *jouissance*. For Deleuze, pure life – although as unthinkable as for Lacan – is mostly unspectacular: a non-subjective, asignifying singularity: "We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else" (*Immanence* 27). Deleuze is always at his most lyrical when he describes the singularity of 'non-human' life: "there is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing, or substance. We reserve the name haecceity [it-ness] for it. A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and to be affected" (*Plateaus* 261). Already in *Bergsonism*, Deleuze had found the question that was to occupy him – as well as Lacan! – all of his life "how, and under what conditions, does life in fact become self-consciousness" (52). In trying to elucidate this question, he himself paid a lot of "what Bergson calls 'attention to life'" (70). As Deleuze notes à-propos his reading of Dickens, "we shouldn't enclose life in the single moment when individual life confronts universal death. A life is everywhere, in all the moments that a given living subject goes through ... an immanent life carrying with it the events or singularities that are merely actualized in subjects and objects. This indefinite life does not itself have moments ... but only ... between-moments; it doesn't just come about or come after but offers the immensity of an empty time where one sees the event yet to come and already happened, in the absolute of an immediate consciousness" (*Immanence* 29). To immediately separate this from a Lacanian logic, this consciousness is *not* a human – and thus a Hegelian – consciousness. Rather, it is "a pure stream of a-subjective consciousness, a pre-reflexive impersonal consciousness, a qualitative duration of consciousness without a self" (25). In fact, "sensation is only a break within the flow of [this] absolute consciousness" (25). "What, in fact, is a sensation? It is the operation of contracting trillions of vibrations onto a receptive surface. Quality emerges from this, quality that is nothing other than contracted quantity" (*Bergsonism* 74). ¶¶ After all is said and done, one still would like to sit down and talk with Žižek about it all in more detail. Maybe my reading of Deleuze is problematic. Maybe there are moments of inconsistency in Deleuze. Ultimately, to be a Lacanian is fine, and to be a Deleuzian is fine as well. Both systems have their own internal consistency, logic and beauty. But in order to really talk, one first has to try and find the lines and the vectors that make up the cosmos of the 'other.' Žižek either never took the time for that or he was not able to distance himself enough from the Lacanian logic. Ultimately, the desire to incorporate Deleuze – to sublate him into his own brand of Hegelianism – must have been just a bit too strong for Žižek to really connect with Deleuze. As a result, the book is ultimately a failure. Not because it does not make sense [it is quite easy to follow its Lacanian arguments, and from that perspective, his critique of Deleuze is 'in actual fact' quite predictable], but because it is too often curiously 'beside the point.' One wonders what kind of love Žižek meant when he talked, in connection with Deleuze, about his "true love for a philosopher" (*Organs* 3). Is it possible to love Deleuze? Žižek, it seems, can love Deleuze only when he has first dressed him up in Hegelian drag. .

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